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if all is laboring and moving within, as all is labor and movement without, we arrive at a result of the highest importance, since it seems applicable to all the celestial bodies ; and thus we obtain stronger proof of the existence of a great principle of *universal instability*, which was announced, or dimly seen, by Newton and other philosophers ; a principle, superior to those grand rules, which we have been accustomed to regard as constituting exclusively the laws of nature, from the security which we see in it, above the longest and apparently perfect revolutions of the solar system ; a principle, which appears to rule the universe, even in its smallest parts ; which incessantly modifies all things, which changes, or misplaces them, and without return ; and which carries them along, through the immensity of ages, to new ends, which human intelligence cannot certainly penetrate, but of which it may nevertheless be proud to have foreseen the necessity.' pp. 90-92.

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ART. II.—*The Substance of Two Reports of the Faculty of Amherst College to the Board of Trustees, with the Doings of the Board thereon.* Amherst. 1827.

THE subject of education has of late excited so much of the public attention, that no apology will be required by our readers, if we occasionally introduce it to their consideration. It is well known to all, that the system of education in this country, in all its departments, has been for some time the object of severe scrutiny ; that new text-books have been multiplied in all branches of study, and new views of instruction been adopted by teachers ; that seminaries have been founded on new plans, and that, in their zeal for improvement, our older institutions have not been able to keep pace with the desire of reform which pervades the community, and are now meditating important changes. We avail ourselves, therefore, of the opportunity afforded by the public notice, which the Faculty of Amherst College have given of an innovation on the long established usages of the American colleges, to offer our views on some of the changes proposed in our system of collegial education. In the remarks which we shall make, we design nothing unfriendly to an institution which is supported by a large amount of influence. We propose to discuss a

subject of general interest to all the colleges of our land, and to inquire how far and in what way, they may respond to the loud calls, which are sounded from all sides with an energy which cannot be resisted, and which demand of them an important change in their system ; a change, in which the institution here named, though the youngest, has at a single leap reached a point, which the oldest institutions have not thought of attaining, and which, from the deliberate caution of age, they would perhaps view, as placed beyond the bounds of reform, and within the borders of doubtful innovation.

Before, however, proceeding to this discussion, we think it best to state, as briefly and clearly as we can, the circumstances under which the zeal for improvements in education has arisen both in Europe and this country, so as to give our readers a general view of this subject, as it has presented itself to our minds.

For the sake of distinctness, we may consider the youth of a country as divided, in reference to the objects to be effected by a system of education, into three classes. The first embraces those, who are designed for professional or literary and scientific life, and who therefore need the best education that can be obtained ; the second, those who, preparing for commercial and other pursuits demanding enterprise and wide information, do not require an education so extensive as those before mentioned ; the last class is composed of those, who are designed for the ordinary employments of the mechanic and agriculturist, and whose education has fully answered its purpose, when it has prepared them to pursue with intelligence their respective occupations.

In Great Britain, until within a few years, the means of education were chiefly confined to the universities ; the grammar schools, which were particularly designed to prepare youth for the universities ; and the common parish schools, which, though most widely diffused in Scotland, are, as appears from recent and careful investigations, even there very far from meeting the wants of the community. There were, indeed, a few other institutions, such as the private academies established for the education of Dissenters, who are, in fact, excluded from the universities ; but the course of education pursued at these institutions corresponded in general with that adopted in our colleges ; so that no general provision was made for the wants of youth designed for commercial and active pursuits.

In Scotland, about thirty years since, a desire of improvement showed itself, of incalculable importance to the cause of general intelligence. At Glasgow a project was started for giving instruction to persons engaged in the mechanic arts. A public course of lectures was given for their benefit by Dr Birkbeck, which artisans were invited to attend. The plan succeeded beyond all expectation. Though it was long before the public could be persuaded of the importance or practicability of elevating the unlettered mechanic above the character of a mere machine, in time prejudices were overcome. In 1821 the School of Arts, as it was called, was established at Edinburgh, for the instruction of this class of the community in the principles of their respective arts by lectures from distinguished professors. The example was soon followed in London in the foundation of the Mechanics' Institution, and has by this time been imitated in most, if not all, the considerable towns of England. It is well known, that the individual who has done the most to open sources of valuable knowledge to this class of society is Mr Brougham. In laying before the English public the importance and practicability of a plan for the benefit of the poorer classes, he has reared the best and most durable monument of his usefulness and fame. By descending, if we may be allowed to use the expression, in accommodation to the prevailing estimate of the value of such labors, by descending from his proud elevation in the English parliament, to study the simple annals of the poor, and to devise, with great minuteness of detail, ways and means of throwing the light of intelligence and science into their obscure dwellings, once the neglected abodes of ignorance, he has set a noble example to men of the highest name, to prove, that, if they would consult the best welfare of their country, the interests of education are worthy of their profound concern.

Before the period which we have mentioned, the same general features were to be observed in the system of education on the continent, which we have pointed out in that which prevailed in England. There was a similar provision made for the poorer classes, though to a far less degree, and for those who were designed for the universities, while the intermediate classes were left without any public provision for their instruction. On the return, however, of a general peace in 1815, a zeal for improvements in education was soon manifested. In France, in particular, the system of common

schools received great attention ; men distinguished for rank and learning, among whom may be mentioned De Gerando, participated in exertions for their improvement ; and schools for mutual instruction have now been for several years extensively established not only in that, but in every kingdom of the continent. Primary schools are rapidly extending through the vast dominions of Russia ; and even in the capital of Siberia, a high school of much respectability is in successful operation. But as France, more than seven centuries since, led the way in the great subject of education, and in her renowned university furnished the model of all the other European universities, so in these last days, more than any other country of Europe, has she given increased attention to this subject, and, under the imperial government, in one respect advanced beyond England ; we refer to the means of education provided for those, who were to engage in the active business of life.

More than sixty years since an academical institution was founded at Soreze in the department of Tarn, in which a highly liberal and extended course of studies was established under the superintendence of able professors, and the pupils were permitted to pursue such branches as might be designated by their friends. The greatest advance in this part of the French system of education was made under the auspices of Napoleon, in the foundation of the Polytechnic and Normal schools, that for a time superseded the old schools, in which Latin and Greek alone were taught. These new institutions, under his patronage, enjoyed the labors of the ablest men, attained in a few years the highest celebrity, and were of great value in their influence on the cause of education, of science, and letters. But on the restoration of the Bourbons, they were abolished, and the reigning dynasty, by giving the Jesuits the exclusive control of education, checked the progress of improvement, and seemed to carry France back into a former age. The public attention is, however, now much directed to this part of the system of education. The ‘ Society of Christian Morals ’ at Paris awarded, in 1824, a prize of three hundred dollars to the author of a dissertation on the following question ; ‘ Is there not in our system of public instruction between the primary schools and colleges a chasm, which it would be useful to supply by establishments of a special nature ? What would be the advantage of such establishments, and what organization and plan of studies ought to be adopted in them ? ’

The most enlightened men now look forward with confidence to the establishment of seminaries similar to those, which the active genius of Napoléon called into being; and now that the Jesuits have lost the control of the literary institutions, they have reason to anticipate the speedy effect of more liberal views of the great purposes of education. Several institutions, however, are now in operation in France for the benefit of those engaged in the common occupations of life, such as the Schools of Arts and Trades, at which many pupils are supported from the royal treasury. A practical School of Mines has been for some time established, where gratuitous instruction is given in Mineralogy and the various operations of Mining. Free courses of lectures on Mechanics and Chemistry, as applied to the arts and to the common purposes of life, were founded at Paris in 1819. The king of France has, within a few years, expended more than a million of francs in the establishment of an institution for those, who wish to gain a practical knowledge of the principles of Agriculture. Few institutions, comparatively speaking, like these we have spoken of, are found in the other continental kingdoms; we would not, however, omit to mention those of Fellenberg and Pestalozzi, and others on the same plan, in which are found ample means of education for all ranks, from the common laborer to the prince.

In returning to England, we find, as a natural effect of the efforts made for the benefit of those engaged in the mechanic arts, that the public attention has been of late much directed to the importance of providing means of education for such as are unable to obtain, or do not require, an education at the universities, and whose wants are not well supplied by any existing establishments. In 1826, a meeting was held in London for the purpose of founding a seminary for instruction in commercial and professional science. Much discussion and much inquiry have at length resulted in the foundation of a new university, which will fully supply what is certainly a great defect in the English system of education. This institution, as is well known, will throw open its doors to all who wish to prepare themselves for what forms the business of a large proportion of the English population, the pursuits of mercantile life; though a prominent object in its establishment was, to provide the best means of education, both liberal and professional, for those designed for Medicine and the Law.

Taking then a general view of the facts in regard to the state of education in Europe, which we have gleaned from various sources, it appears, that, until a recent period, means of education were provided for the poorer classes in the common branches of knowledge, as well as for those who were preparing themselves for professional or literary life, while an intermediate class, composed of such as were to engage in active pursuits, like those of the merchant, the agriculturist, and head manufacturer, had no public provision made for them, and their education was left to be wholly a matter of private concern ; that, however, within a few years public attention has been called to this important deficiency ; and that measures are now in active operation, which will open to this large portion of every community the sources of a competent education.

This spirit of improvement in education has been caught in this country. Much has been said and written of late about the defects in our systems of collegial discipline, and about the importance of practical education. We do not intend to assert, that the complaints which have been uttered are without foundation, nor that great improvements may not be made in the long established usages of our highest literary institutions. It is, however, believed, that prevailing opinions have been adopted with less reflection, than the importance of the subject demanded ; and that the zeal for reform is not tempered with sufficient caution and discrimination. We shall, therefore, suggest a few considerations to show, that there is a wide difference in the circumstances under which these opinions have arisen in Europe and in this country.

In the first place, there is not an institution in this country, which corresponds to an European university. An European university is designed for those, who, having completed an extensive course of study at the grammar school, or gymnasium, are desirous of preparing themselves for the professions, or for literary pursuits. There is, however, an important difference, though not in theory, yet existing in practice, between the English and the continental universities. The latter are resorted to by all students in the three professions ; and whether we regard the spirit which pervades them, or the means of instruction which they afford, we are not aware, that they are obnoxious to the censures of the most earnest zealots in the cause of reform. The English universities, on the other hand, with

their stupendous libraries and ample apparatus, are resorted to by those only, who wish to accomplish themselves by a course of education, chiefly confined to classical and mathematical studies, or who are looking forward to the church. Not that in these venerable seats of learning, the whole circle of the sciences and the various departments of literature are not made the subjects of learned lectures by able scholars, but that, in consequence of the predominance given to certain studies to the neglect of others, and of defects in their modes of instruction, as well as of other causes, which it is here unnecessary to enumerate, they do not offer to any, except those we have mentioned, sufficient inducements to avail themselves of their advantages. A few facts, stated in a recent number of our journal, show that, in regard to professional education, they are in their operation confined to the church alone. The unhappy influence of this circumstance on the legal and medical professions is obvious to all, and has been long the subject of deep regret. To remedy this evil is a prominent object of the London University.

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show the principal causes of the loud complaints which our English brethren have made against their universities. Now it should be recollected by those who are disposed to censure the system of education in our colleges and universities, that these institutions differ essentially from the institutions of the same name in England, and are not liable to the objections justly made against them. Our colleges are designed to give youth a general education, classical, literary, and scientific, as comprehensive as an education can well be, which is professedly preparatory alike for all the professions. They afford the means of instruction in all the branches, with which it is desirable for a youth to have a general acquaintance before directing his attention to a particular course of study, while professional studies are pursued at separate institutions, the law, divinity, and medical schools dispersed over the land. Although, therefore, there may be defects in our system of collegial education, it has few of the defects which exist in that of the English universities.

But, in the second place, there is another consideration, which should have been taken into view before adopting, in this country, the reasoning applicable to the state of things in Europe. In England and France, there were no intermediate seminaries between the grammar schools and the universities ;



with us, there always have been. Our academies and private schools are not like the grammar schools of England. They are not Westminster or Eton schools, established solely to prepare young men for the colleges or universities. In some of them the classical is separated from the English department, and in the latter youth are taught all the branches of an English education, which are necessary to qualify them to become well informed merchants and farmers and mechanics; and in most of them the studies suitable for preparing the pupils for active life are the principal object of attention. We do not say, that they have supplied the wants of the community in these respects; but they form a feature in our system of education, not to be found in that of Europe until a very recent period, and their defects are not so much in their theory, as in the manner in which it is carried into execution. One of these institutions we might mention, which enrolls on its catalogue many of our highest names, and which is amply furnished with the means of efficient instruction in both the departments of an extended classical and English education. The recent establishment of high schools in our principal towns, is an important advance in the cause of education among us; affording, as they do, to the poorest class of the community advantages, which heretofore could not be obtained except at the best endowed academies. Thus we perceive, that the complaints made by English writers against a liberal education, as it is termed, have been reiterated in this country too readily, and without considering sufficiently the circumstances, which make the actual state of education among us very different from what it is among them.

We are now prepared to consider the course, which improvements in education are taking among us, and the changes which are proposed in the usages of our colleges. And here we would remark, that in no country is there a wider field for displaying the power of education than in this; and no friend to his country would indulge the thought, that its operations in regard to any class of society should be fettered by usages, however sanctioned by age. For whatever situation he may be designed, the youth ought to have access to the best and most effectual means of preparation. If he is to engage in mechanical employments, let him be thoroughly taught the principles of his art, that he may become an intelligent workman, well versed in the laws of nature, and able to avail himself most

efficiently of her aid. If he is to be an agriculturist, let him not be contented to till his land as his fathers have done before him, but be enabled, by a skilful application of the principles of science, to triumph over the obstacles of nature, and, with more truth than ever before, to subdue the earth. If he is to be a merchant, let him become acquainted with the languages of foreign nations, and be well versed in the great principles which regulate the commerce of the world. A new science has sprung into being, which peculiarly invites his attention and regard. Is he to engage in professional or literary life? Throw open to him the avenues of science and literature, that by rigid discipline he may be prepared to exercise his high vocation with honor to himself and the community.

Such views of education have not, it must be allowed, been fully appreciated in this country until a recent period. The consequence of a more enlightened estimate of the value of the great objects of education has been to give rise to a new kind of institutions among us. We refer to those, which are designed to give the mechanic and manufacturer and agriculturist a thorough training in those scientific principles, a knowledge of which is of the highest importance to them in their labors. The first institution of this kind was established at Gardiner, in Maine; and others have been founded in different parts of the country, or are in contemplation. Viewing such institutions in connexion with our best academies and our high schools, and taking into consideration also the interest felt in their improvement, we may say without boasting, that the wants of the class of active men in regard to education are even now better supplied in this country than in any other. But the zeal for improvement does not stop here; it is extending to our higher institutions. The public are directing their eyes to our colleges, and the feeling is prevalent, that they ought to admit to their advantages such, as may pursue a course of education having a more direct reference to their future calling, than is deemed consistent with the established routine of studies.

Much has been said and written on the inutility of a course of education, which has not a direct bearing on the future profession in life. In regard to such remarks, so far as they relate to our colleges, we will offer a few suggestions, though the subject would admit of an extended discussion. We apprehend, that these remarks are often made without sufficient reflection on the design of these institutions. They profess noth-

ing more than to prepare young men for the study of the professions. The question than respecting such institutions is, what course of mental discipline will best effect this object ; and it is idle to think of adapting the academic course to the future profession in any other way, than by such an arrangement of studies, as will best prepare the young men for their professional education, and for that kind of exercise to which their mental powers are to be put in after life. The Schools of Arts and Trades, which have as direct a bearing on the future calling as any can have, do not teach trades ; their pupils must, notwithstanding the advantages which they afford, serve a regular apprenticeship. Precisely so must it be with our colleges. Improve them, change their system as much as we may, they will not, unless they are transformed into universities on the same plan with those of Europe, supersede the necessity of our law, medical, and divinity schools. They only lay the foundation, on which the student may afterwards build. And when we survey the wide range of inquiry which each of the professions opens before him who would reap its highest honors, when we reflect on the high intellectual discipline which it requires, and consider that the routine of studies adopted at our colleges is in its main particulars what professional learning and experience have for ages prescribed as a fit preparation for professional studies, who will undertake to assert with confidence of any one of the branches taught at our colleges, that it is of no use to the future lawyer or physician or divine ; that the time devoted to it is lost ; that it should be expunged from the code ? When deciding on a general course for all three of the professions, much less, we believe, can any one affirm, that the one pursued at our colleges requires important changes.

But one department of study is in reality the chief cause of all the complaints made against our academic course, and this not because it is not allowed to have its merits and high merits too, but because it requires time and diligence, while a shorter way, it is thought, might be formed of getting into the business of life. The rage of the present day is to leave the great high way of knowledge, which has been trodden for ages, and seek out bypaths, which will lead the traveller to the end of his journey in less time and with less labor. The tendency of such opinions is, we believe, to give currency to a superficial education. Much may be done without doubt in the way of

improving methods of instruction ; and in this respect we would shorten the avenues of knowledge as much as possible ; but we must look with suspicion on those who say to the passer by, Turn not in here, go not there ; when thousands have found, that those same ways open upon scenes, rich in every attraction that can reward the traveller for his pains.

We have no intention of discussing the claims of the ancient languages to the attention of all youth, who are preparing for professional or literary life. We have no overweening veneration for ancient usage ; but we believe the old opinion to be a good one, that to high success in literature or the professions, to form such men as Clarke, Mansfield, Burke, Canning, Gregory, or Good, a liberal education, using the expression in its common acceptation, is in the highest degree important. We cannot believe, that the most distinguished names that have adorned the three professions, the statesmen who have guided the policy of their age, and the most eminent scholars whose writings now form our standard works in science and literature, ever looked back on the time, spent in their classical education, as lost to them ; and that they would warn those, who would imitate their high example, and who aspire to reach the eminence which they attained, to avoid the path in which they walked during the years of their pupilage. In England notwithstanding the clamor raised against the universities, the value of a classical education (and we do not assert it unadvisedly) is still felt by professional men with undiminished force. The London University is mainly designed to afford the means of a liberal education to the legal and medical professions. For ourselves therefore we doubt much, whether our own college course of study requires any great modification, except so far as relates to the mode of instruction, which should undoubtedly be more thorough and efficient. There is no danger of having the standard of professional education too high. No young man should commence a preparation for the responsible duties of a profession with the idea, that he has but little to do. Let him be made to perceive, that he has a long and laborious duty before him, and his exertions will correspond to the occasion which calls them forth. What Quintilian says of eloquence, may be applied with equal force to eminence in any pursuit. ‘*Nam est certe aliquid consummata eloquentia ; neque ad eam pervenire natura humani ingenii prohibet. Quod si non contingat, altius tamen ibunt, qui ad summa nitentur, quam qui, præsumptâ desperatione*

quo velint evadendi, protinus circa ima substiterint.' Did our limits permit, we would devote more time to this topic. We wish that those who are more able would engage, with earnestness and careful reflection, in the discussion of the nature and extent of that education, which would fully prepare a youth for his professional studies. It is a serious subject, and not to be treated lightly. It is of deep moment in its influence on the professional and literary reputation of our country.

So far as the objections brought against the collegial course of study arise from the claims of that portion of our youth, who are not designed for the professions, but for what is termed the active business of life, we are disposed to listen to them, and would cheerfully coöperate in any plan for their removal, that would not compromise the interests of professional education. The prescribed course of study in our colleges effectually excludes such persons from their advantages. A second class of institutions, designed expressly for them, would be making the machinery of education more complicated and expensive than the case demands. We perceive then no reason, why this class of our youth may not receive a full education, comprising a competent knowledge of modern languages, political economy, and English science and literature, at our first institutions, where the best means of instruction in these departments must always be had; and why changes may not be made in the system of our colleges, which shall fully meet their wants. Such changes have been commenced in some of these institutions; they are the subject of deliberation in all. From the pamphlet with which we have introduced this article, it appears, that the institution at Amherst has done more in the way of innovation than any other. Students are to be received there on the same terms of admission as at other colleges. Two courses of study are then open before them; in one of which the modern languages are substituted for the ancient, and at the close of their college life, they who have gone through the respective courses receive the same college honors, the same degree. Other minor differences between the two courses might be mentioned, but our remarks will be confined to that which we have stated.

To the friends of learning it must be obvious, that great changes in the long established usages of our colleges are to be adopted with caution, inasmuch as they affect the whole system of education in our country, and their influence will be

felt for ages, nay will be permanent. Much has been said of the inflexibility of old institutions, and we are as ready as any to admit in many cases the justice of the reproach. But institutions, which guard the interests of education, we believe, ought to be cautious and slow in innovation. They should keep a watchful eye upon the world without, notice the progress of things, and seize all the benefits of increasing light; but if they are to change with every change of fashion, and conform to the caprices of the times, it will augur ill for the cause of letters, which they have in keeping. Whenever important changes in their constitution are in agitation, they must take comprehensive views, and not proceed rashly in the work of reform, lest in their eagerness to remedy existing evils, they promote the interest of one part of the community at the expense of another. With such impressions we cannot but think, that the wisdom of the sudden measure adopted by the institution to which we refer, to say the least, is questionable. We think it has fallen into the error we have just alluded to, and that in its zeal in favor of those who are not preparing for professional life, it may prove to have seriously injured the cause of liberal education, of which a good discipline in the ancient classics forms an essential part, and which the friends of learning feel should be more thorough and extensive.

We are altogether in favor of having studies placed at the option of the student, though this liberty of choice must obviously have its limits. We are persuaded that such a change in the system will have a tendency to give a character for vigor and thorough research to the scholarship of our colleges, which it has not hitherto sustained. Students will not be goaded and driven, as heretofore, to the study of any branch of learning, however it may be to them an object of indifference or of aversion. Each may consult his inclination, unless he aspires after literary honor; and in that case, he must go through a prescribed course, which will be imposing no other restraint upon him, than what exists in regard to all honors, that of using the exertions which are necessary to acquire them. It must be recollected, however, that in the event of such an innovation in the usages of our colleges, reference must be had to it in the honors which they confer. Literary degrees have now, and always have had, a determinate character. They have been for centuries the badges of liberal and professional education. The condition on which they are received must doubtless vary with the pro-

gress of knowledge. No one is so bound up in the love of prescription as to maintain that the requirements for a degree should be the same now that they were even thirty years ago. But these degrees as has been shown in a recent number of our journal, were originally designed to be the rewards of high attainments in a liberal education, and such, we are clearly of opinion, they should remain. It is true that they have not always been a sure test of meritorious industry ; they are liable to abuse in common with every other honor, and we are aware that they were never less a distinction than at the present time. But this is no reason for destroying their value entirely. Introduce the rigid examinations of former days, and the honor of these degrees will be restored. The path of a liberal education is toilsome, and encouragements must be held out to the student when fainting in the way. Such encouragements are found in the literary honors which are awarded him at the end of his course, and he finds a sufficient recompense for his labors in the passport, which they give him, into that great community of various lands who have drunk deep at the fountains of learning. We speak of literary degrees not as they are, but as they should be, and as it was originally designed they should be. Change their significance, and a liberal education will be without its appropriate rewards. Such we apprehend to be the tendency of this plan of parallel courses. It throws together into one mass students having in their education different objects before them, and pursuing plans of study in an important respect opposed to each other, as viewed by themselves and by the public at large ; whichever of the two courses the youth pursues, at the end he receives the same honors, the same degree ; and when he appears in the world with his title of A. B. or A. M. no one knows whether he has received a liberal education or not. The course, moreover, in which the modern languages are substituted for the ancient, is less laborious, less disciplinary ; and what portion of our young men will be found to take from choice the more laborious in preference to the less laborious course, when each is crowned with the same honors ?

But again, the object in establishing the new course is to meet the wants of a portion of the community, who do not need a classical education. But this object is not effected, so long as all who are admitted to this new course are required to go through the preparatory course in the classics usually required

for admission into college. This requisition must therefore, in the case of such, be given up in order to satisfy their demands; and when that is done, we shall have among us Baccalaureates, who have never attended at all to a course of study, with particular reference to which that degree was originally established and has always been conferred, on precisely the same footing with those, who have gone through the routine of a liberal education. Thus would these literary distinctions come to mean something very different in this country from what they have meant heretofore, and from what they do mean universally in Europe. Such we believe is the tendency of this plan of parallel courses. We cannot, therefore, but regard it as affecting materially the interests of liberal education among us; and if so, such an innovation ought to be viewed with distrust by the guardians of our literature. If a radical change is about to be made in our system of education, which is likely to be prejudicial to the interests of sound learning, they are the persons to take the subject into serious consideration, and to save the literature of the land, and they alone can do it.

While looking with jealousy on anything which threatens injury to the cause of classical education, its friends are influenced by no illiberal views, but by a deep solicitude for the best interests of our country. For let us consider for a moment what are our wants in respect to liberally educated men. Can we afford to spare any of those who receive the benefits of our present system, inefficient as it is? There have been sent forth the present year from our colleges about eight hundred young men, to meet the annual wants of a community of twelve millions in its three professions, to furnish well qualified instructors for the various seminaries of learning, and to supply the halls of legislation with enlightened statesmen; that is, on an average, one liberally educated man has been furnished for every fifteen thousand inhabitants, or, to confine our estimate to New England, one for every six thousand. If we reflect on the rapid increase of our population, and consider that to our liberally educated men we must mainly look for the support of sound learning and elegant literature among us, the best thoughts and most efficient exertions of the friends of these great interests of our country should be engaged in promoting the cause of liberal education, in its highest sense. While, therefore, the most strenuous advocates of classical learning would do all in their power to promote such a reform



in the colleges, as will lay open their advantages, so far as is desired, to those who are preparing for the duties of active life, they still must feel that changes should be made with caution.

Though we have thus plainly expressed our dissatisfaction with the plan which has been adopted by Amherst College, with a view of giving that institution a more popular character, we yet think that some scheme may be devised, which will solve the question, which is now the subject of much inquiry among all our colleges. We would not be wise over much, but we would offer for their consideration the outlines of a plan, which has suggested itself to our minds. Let that large portion of our youth, whose claims we have considered, be received at our colleges after such preparation, as shall fit them for entering upon their college studies. Let such a course of study in college be pointed out, as will qualify them, when they go out into the world, to conduct their respective callings with intelligence, and to take their stand with well educated men. But let the integrity of our literary degrees be preserved ; let them, as heretofore through seven centuries, be confined to those who receive a liberal education, of which a thorough classical knowledge shall form an essential part. We would not, however, exclude this class of students from academic honors. Let them be stimulated by all the incentives of literary ambition. Let them take a part in the public exhibitions and commencements ; and, lastly, let them have the testimonials of a diploma, which shall testify, as in the case of the other class of students, to their diligence, good morals, and laudable attainments, and let them receive an appropriate degree, which they may bear with them, as their insignia in after life. This is not the place, nor are we the persons to point out the details of such a system. There should be some general communication, on a subject of common interest, between the learned of the land, the guardians of our literary institutions, and, after mature deliberation, some plan of operations determined on, which shall go forth to the world sanctioned by the first names. And here we would remark, that the colleges of our country, as well as of any country, form a sort of community, governed substantially by the same laws, and the same rules of procedure. The *ad eundem* degrees suppose the course of education pursued at the different institutions to be in general the same. Such

being the fact, there is plainly a difficulty in a wide departure from the established usages of the several colleges in such matters, without a general consultation. The recent convention of the different medical schools of New England, for the purpose of establishing a uniform system of medical education, may suggest a valuable hint, as to the best mode of proceeding, when we would introduce important changes in our system of collegial education. The plan, however, which we have proposed, is no such innovation, as would interfere with the common law of our literary institutions, in regard to their degrees. But we believe that such a reform, while it would meet the wishes of the public, will have a direct tendency in favor of classical education.

As has before been intimated, a great obstacle to the advance of students in classical studies arises from the circumstance, that many engage in them not from choice, but because on the present system they cannot be separated from other studies, to which they desire to direct their particular attention. A few such individuals are sufficient to paralyze the exertions of a whole class, and even of the instructor himself; for in all instruction, there is a mutual action between the teacher and his pupils. The plan which we have suggested will, in a great degree, remedy this evil. The student will not feel himself restricted to a particular course of study, of which a large portion has no bearing on his future vocation in life. Is he preparing for active pursuits? He is engaged in a system of studies, which competent judges have thought best adapted to his purpose. Is he aspiring to reap the honors of literary or professional and public life? His object is to lay the same foundation, on which distinguished names in science and literature have reared the lofty superstructure of their fame. And when such a spirit animates the young men in our literary institutions, there will be a zeal and a vigor in their pursuit of knowledge, and an energy in the efforts of their teachers to urge them forward, now unknown.

But such a change in our system would in other respects be followed by important results. Our literary degrees being then marks of literary distinction, more peculiarly than heretofore, it will be felt to be a matter of importance to preserve their value, as incentives to effort, and to make them, more than has been the case in our country, the reward of industry and attainment. Our college examinations would then be

more searching, and would thus lead to a more thorough training and more laborious exertions. The most effectual method of raising the standard of education in its highest departments, is by means of improvements in those which are subordinate. Any important improvement in the education obtained even in the primary schools, will soon exert an influence on the highest institutions of the land. The scheme now proposed will, we conceive, have a similar operation. There will be two great classes of educated men in society; those who have received a liberal education, and those who, though they have not advanced so far, go out into the world with much higher attainments than in individuals of their class have before been known. As a natural consequence, larger demands will be made upon the former class, who, in order to maintain their standing in the community, must add to acquirements, no longer confined to their number, the attainments of a finished classical education. In the remarks which we have made, we have said nothing about the importance of all, who are engaged in the pursuit of a liberal education, securing a competent knowledge of modern languages and literature. Nothing need be said to enforce this upon them; their pride as scholars will forbid them to neglect knowledge, the possession of which, at least in a degree, now confers on liberally educated men little credit, while its absence is, we might almost say, a disgrace. To such, moreover, this knowledge comes almost as a matter of course; as their acquaintance with the ancient tongues affords the greatest facility in the acquisition of it. But we must now take leave of this subject. The views which we have set forth have produced a firm conviction in our minds, that while danger is to be apprehended from the spirit of innovation, which now pervades our country on the subject of education, changes similar to those which we have suggested, would be highly beneficial to the cause of learning.

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